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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2008

In Today's Papers

New Detentions in the 'Ergenekon' Investigation
All media outlets report 19 suspects, including six army lieutenants and a military academy student, were detained Thursday in police operations in the cities of Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, as part of the Ergenekon investigation. Actress Nurseli Idiz, her manager Seyhan Soylu and lawyer Levent Temiz were taken into custody in Istanbul. Papers report Idiz and Soylu were preparing a documentary about "the women of the republic." Papers recall that Soylu, a transvestite, is believed to have organized a scheme which sparked a political scandal ahead of the "February 28" process in 1997, and led to the collapse of the government of the Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan. Temiz is the former chief of the ultra-nationalist youth clubs, "Ulku Ocaklari," affiliated with the far right MHP. Five lieutenants and a military student also have been detained. The military General Staff (TGS) released a statement yesterday to announce that the five lieutenants and the military student were detained in line with the prosecutor's instructions.

90 suspects have been detained in relation to the Ergenekon investigation. On October 20, suspects will appear before the court to face charges that include membership to an armed terrorist group, attempting to bring down the government, and inciting rebellions against the Turkish state.

Calls for RTUK Chairman to Resign
All papers refer to the controversial status of Zahid Akman, Chairman of Turkey's radio and television regulatory board, RTUK. Since his name was often mentioned during the Deniz Feneri fraud case in Germany, reports note "there is an increasing pressure from the opposition as well as from AKP members on Akman to resign from his position." Taraf carries the headline "It is Time for Akman to Resign," and mentions that both Parliament Speaker Toptan and the board members of the ruling AKP have asked Akman to resign. Milliyet also reports the calls for his resignation and highlight today's RTUK meeting to discuss the current events "which will indicate the fate of Akman."

Papers largely cover Parliament Speaker Toptan's statement during a television interview which he indirectly called Akman to resign by saying "We have no authority to impeach the chairman of RTUK. However given the current nature of events, everybody should act responsibly in order to help things to go smoothly."

Meanwhile the RTUK Board, [an executive body with members appointed by AKP and CHP] today convenes to discuss allegation against chairman Akman. RTUK was scheduled to meet on September 9 but because the AKP -affiliated board members failed to appear for the meeting, it was postponed until today.

PM Erdogan Calls for Boycott Against Dogan Media
Milliyet, Vatan, Hurriyet, Posta, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Yeni Safak and others: Today's papers report on the remarks PM Erdogan made at the AKP Ankara provincial group Iftar dinner at the Bilkent Hotel. Mainstream Hurriyet says "Erdogan harshly criticized the media for reporting on developments related to the Deniz Feneri case and urged his party officials to start a campaign to boycott these papers." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak says "Erdogan urged his party members not to buy Dogan Media papers." Mainstream Milliyet's headline reads "This is the candidate country for full EU membership and the PM of the country is calling for a boycott against the media."

Meanwhile, mainstream Vatan and liberal Radikal report that PM Erdogan also criticized NTV's Ankara rep Murat Akgun for asking AKP Deputy Chairman Dengir Mir Firat about allegations that Erdogan's wealth amounted to billions of dollars.

Editorial Commentary on Deniz Feneri/Turkey

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Ferai Tinc wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "Following the verdict on the Deniz Feneri case in Germany, the AKP rulers cannot afford to treat this issue as an individual crime. The political implications of the Deniz Feneri case are very closely followed by the public in Turkey and abroad. The more the government dares to deal directly with this case, the more it will gain credit for Turkey's influence in foreign policy issues."

Ergun Babahan wrote in mainstream Sabah: "Turkey is going through a two-way judicial test regarding the Deniz Feneri and the Ergenekon cases. On one hand, there is the fraud case that exploits religion and on the other side there is a violation of laws in the name of patriotism. These two cases are the biggest obstacles to Turkey's emergence as a country that values modernity, democracy, secularism, and the supremacy of law. A new era should start in Turkey in which those who commit illegal acts are punished. Illegal acts cannot be not a matter of ideology."

Editorial Commentary on New U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, DTP Closure Case

Ozgen Acar writes in leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet: "U.S. Centcom's mandate extends along oil-rich countries from Iraq to Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa. This means General Petraeus, as the head of Centcom, is now the 'oil commander' of the Middle East and Central Asia, while James Jeffrey is to be the new U.S. Ambassador to Ankara. Jeffrey, a former soldier, once worked at Incirlik Airbase.

Following his assignment to Iraq, he became Secretary Rice's most efficient assistant. One year ago, he was made a National Security Advisor to President Bush. Jeffrey's assignment to Ankara does not only make him the new U.S. Ambassador in Turkey. If you put one leg of a compass on Ankara, and use the other to draw an arc from Tehran to Damascus -- Jeffrey will become an 'indirect ambassador' for the 'terror crescent' of Iran, Iraq and Syria. In other words, Jeffrey is being assigned to Ankara as a 'regional ambassador,' because Ankara will be the 'capital of capitals.' If the arc is extended as far as the Caucasus, Petraeus will begin his new job as the 'oil chief commander' and Jeffrey as the 'chief diplomat.'"

Mumtazer Turkone says in Islamist-oriented Zaman: "The closure of the pro-Kurdish political party DTP will only silence those who oppose terror. We have two DTPs -- one glorifies terror and backs the PKK, while the other denounces terror and calls for a political

solution. Southeast Turkey is ready for local elections. The outcome is not important. What matters is Turkey should be able to hold just and non-partisan elections in this region. The closure of the DTP will make those who seek political solutions go bankrupt. The DTP must not be closed."

Turkey-Armenia Talks

Hurriyet and Bugun report a second round of talks between Turkey and Armenia was held in Switzerland early this week between officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on both sides. The upcoming meetings between Turkish and Armenian presidents at UNGA and efforts for arranging a trilateral mechanism between Turkey-Azerbaijan and Armenia were discussed, reports say.

Rice's Harsh Warnings for Moscow

Islamist-oriented Zaman calls U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's speech at the German Marshall Fund "harsh words of criticism." Liberal Radikal reports, "Rice says to Moscow: You Are Isolating Yourselves, while Medvedev says to Rice 'You are Short-Sighted.'" Mainstream Sabah writes, "Rice Warns Russia Not to Return to Darkness."

Sabah, Radikal and Zaman mention that Secretary Rice made a reference to Turkey and praised cooperation for Caucasus stability "by working with our allies, like Turkey."

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"Russia began paying for isolating itself from the world through its actions. We are deepening cooperation with the Caucasus countries and Turkey for energy independence from Russia, and we also try to resolve regional conflicts such as Upper Karabakh," stated Rice.

Editorial Commentary on Global Economic Meltdown, Israel-Livni

Haluk Sahin wrote in liberal-intellectual Radikal: "Everybody says nothing will ever be the same again, but there is no clarity about what is next either. The primary reasons for the collapse of the global economic system are overly ambitious economic policies and rising debt. The United States in particular preferred an excessive way of amassing debt which led to the current economic crisis. There will certainly be social and political consequences, and not only for Americans, but for all of us."

Sami Kohen wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "Will there be peace in the Middle East with Livni as Israel's Prime Minister? Livni supports peace with Palestine. Just like Olmert, she supports the "two-state" solution. In contrast to her rival Netanyahu, she also supports bilateral talks with Syria. It is very important for Livni to become Prime Minister, not only for her country but for the peace and calm in the region as well."

TV News:
CNN Turk

Domestic News

- A court in Diyarbakir has sentenced former pro-Kurdish lawmaker Leyla Zana to 60 years in prison for supporting the PKK in nine different speeches.

- Heavy rains damaged many houses and work places, and claimed one life in Istanbul.

- Turkish Energy Regulatory Board announced a 9 percent increase in electricity prices.

International News

- Russia threatens to block NATO from using its air space for operations in Afghanistan if member states did not stop their "hostile" policies.

- Cyprus leaders Talat and Christofias held Thursday a new meeting to discuss the reunification of the divided island. On October 8, the two leaders will meet again to continue debating the topics of

"administration" and "power sharing."

- Iran completes exercises staged to test its air defenses.

WILSON